



Mr. Cook's
S E R M O N
T O
Young People.



THE BRITISH MUSEUM

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A
S E R M O N
Preach'd to a
S O C I E T Y
O F
Y O U N G P E O P L E
in Sudbury,
On a LORD'S-DAY Evening,
October 1730.

By ^{K.}William Cook, A. M.

Pastor of a Church there.

Tit. ii. 12. Teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and
worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and
godly in this present world.

2 Tim. ii. 22. Flee also youthful Lusts.---

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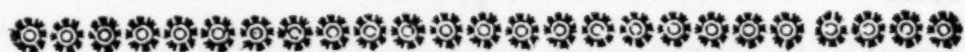


A
S E R M O N

Preach'd to a SOCIETY

O F

Young People.



I. PETER II. Chap. II. v.

*Dearly beloved, I beseech you —— abstain
from fleshly lusts which war against the
Soul.*



THE Words now read, are a general Exhortation, the *Apostle* gives to those, to whom he directs this *Epistle*, and it is made to them in the utmost compassion and tenderness, with the greatest humility & meekness; *Dearly beloved, I beseech you, &c.* He does it, that the exhortation might the more agreeably slide into, and be the more likely to fix on the Mind.

Mind. This may be the grand design of this tenderness, and of his friendly Language: A good Example to be followed by the Gospel Minister. And having laid so good a foundation by his soft and tender address, for the entertainment of his Exhortation, he proceeds directly to the Matter of it; and that is the most weighty and important. He perswades them to *abstain from fleshly lusts*. By fleshly lusts I would understand in general, all *inordinate cravings* and desires of the Soul after *sensual Objects*, after the gross enjoyments of the present Life & World. This is the light & view I purpose to consider these *Lusts* in, and no doubt is the true meaning of them in the *Text*. I know they are frequently elsewhere taken in a different & more restrained sense. Sometimes they intend some particular *gross acts* of Vice which flow from Lust in the Heart, as the Streams do from the Fountain; and so those Sins mentioned *Chap. 4. v. 4.* of this *Epistle*, are called the *Lusts of the Gentiles*. Sometimes they intend the general Corruption of the Nature; sometimes the desires after, and the gross *acts of Uncleaness*. But I would take them here in the *largest sense*, to mean all *worldly Lusts*, the same with that, *Tit. 2. 12*. And as all these in particular, so all other kinds in general of these fleshly Lusts are to be avoided, and abstained from, and not to be indulged. And this weighty advice, the *Apostle* backs and enforces with

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two of the most important *Reasons* in the World, with two of the most moving *Arguments*; the *one* is drawn from our unsettled State and Condition in the present World. As *Pilgrims and Strangers*. We all know with what carelessness and indifference *Travellers* abroad in the World are wont to treat the *Objects* they meet with : These they are not wont to be much affected with, looking upon themselves as absent from and quickly to return home. And such should our carriage be towards the enjoyments of the present World, we should carry it with the like coldness and indifference towards them. The *other Argument* is taken from the great danger of indulging these fleshly Lusts, and the *great wrong and injury they will most certainly do the Soul* : they *war against it*, and if indulged, will be likely to gain the victory and conquest over it, and finally will ruin & destroy it. And altho' both these Arguments are very weighty and forceable to perswade Men to abstain from fleshly Lusts ; it is the *last* of them only, even as they will be exceeding hurtful and *injurious to the Soul*, that I purpose in the *present Discourse* to confine my self to ; tho' the other may have some place in the Discourse. And the general *Observation* I shall make as the ground and foundation of the Discourse shall be this, *viz.*

OBSER.

OBSER. *That we should abstain from the inordinate indulgence of fleshly Lusts, as they are very hurtful and injurious to the Soul.*

I say sinful or inordinate Indulgence of *fleshly Lusts*, because taking of fleshly Lusts in *one sense*, the indulgence of them is lawful, and so cannot be hurtful or injurious to the Soul. Man in his two Constituent parts is *Body & Soul*. And there are the Lusts or desires of the Body after these and those *sensible Objects*, after those things that are necessary to the support and comfort of it. And these desires are implanted on purpose to move Mankind to pursue those things that are in such respects necessary for the Body, to render it easy and happy. And it would most certainly carry in it a gross reflection upon the great *Creator* and wise Author of our Being, to suppose that He had made us with these desires, and all in vain; yea, and when it must needs be a Crime in us to seek after the gratification, or the satisfaction of them. But it is so far from this, that GOD Himself is pleased to propound these sensible things to us as so many motives or arguments, to persuade us to the practice of Religion. How often is He pleased to make the promises of *Temporal Rewards* to Mankind, to encourage them to Obedience. The arguments like that, in *Job 36. 11.*
are

a Society of Young People.

are frequent, if they obey and serve him, They shall spend their Days in prosperity, and their Years in pleasures. Now, can it be tho't reasonable, that GOD should thus propound these things to us, as arguments to Obedience, when at the same time it would be unlawful for us to love & esteem them in some degree & measure; and in the same proportion to look upon our selves favoured, and so far happy, when we are arrived at the enjoyment of them. There are then these *Desires* that may be termed *Fleshly*, such as are to these & those sensible Objects, that are adapted to the support & comfort of the Body, and without which Mankind could not possibly Subsist, much less be happy, that are lawful; and when these desires are confined within their *proper bounds* & Limits, extend no further than the Nature and the Necessity of them do in reason allow, tho' they are still *Fleshly*, they are not injurious to the Soul; not hurtful but subservient to the vigour of it, and the exercise of its Powers in this imbodyed State, wherein the Soul & the Body bear so intimate a relation to one another. It is then the *inordinate indulgence* of these *Desires*, that now falls under Consideration, and is so injurious to the Soul: And how hurtful and injurious they are in *all respects* to the Soul, is exceeding hard to declare. There is no one respect that can be tho't on, wherein these fleshly Lusts inordinately indulged, are not *warring against the Soul*.

I would mention a few of the most obvious, important and comprehensive Instances wherein they are *injurious to the Soul*; which is all that can be allowed me, in the limits of a short Discourse: which will abundantly discover to us of how great weight the Argument is, to persuade us to *abstain from them*.

1. The inordinate indulgence of these Lusts, *is Degrading and Debasing to the Soul*; and in this respect injurious to it. As the two Constituant parts of Man are *Body and Soul*, and make the humane Compound, so the Soul is by far our most *superiour Part*, and from this we are principally & chiefly to draw our Character: This Soul is truly and strictly *Heaven-born*: is the immediate *Offspring of GOD*; without so much as the Agency and Instrumentality of any second Causes at all; and on this account claims kindred with the *Supreme* of the works of GOD, with the *Angels*, those *Morning Stars*, those bright Intelligences. By this we stand nearly related to the World above. While the other part of us, the Body was *formed out of the Dust*, made of the same vile Materials, that the inferiour Creation was made of; and on the account of this, we very much resemble and stand nearly related to the World below: and while this Body is thus gross and earthy, the Soul is Spiritual and Immortal, endowed with the exalted Powers of *Understanding*, *Willing*, *Choosing*, *Refusing*, and the like: is capable of more rational,

tional, manly and superiour Pleasures, than what can possibly flow from the gratification of the senses, from any bodily satisfactions. And must it not then be a great dishonour to the Soul, an Eclipsing of the Glory and Dignity of it, to make it a Servant, a Slave to the *Body*? That while it is so excellent and superiour in it self, capable of a far greater happiness than can possibly flow from the indulgence of fleshly Lusts, the Soul should be made to lie groveling in the *Dust*, and converse with nothing but Flesh and Sense. It is most certainly a horrid Degradation to the Soul, and it brings Mankind upon a level with *the Beasts that perish*. Upon the account of this Soul it is that we (especially) excel the ~~brutal~~ World; and if we enslave this to our *Lusts*, where is the mighty difference between the Man and the Brute? A *sensual* happiness, is the highest they both aim at, and that both are pursuing after. Where then is the difference? To make the Soul thus to truckle to the Body, and to bring it down to serve only the mean purposes of it, and to converse with nothing but Flesh & Sense, while it is capable of, and should be employed in the *service of GOD*, and be *conversing with things Heavenly & Divine*, most certainly is a shame to us; a horrid stain to our Nature; the greatest dishonour to us: and so far, the destroying of our Character, is injurious to us.

brutal

2. The indulgence of these fleshly Lusts, tends greatly to darken & obscure the Understanding of the Soul, and in this regard is very hurtful and injurious. There is nothing that tends more directly to render the Soul cloudy & dark, than the streams of sensual Lusts: as these tend directly to quench the Motions of the Holy SPIRIT, so they do to put out the Light of Understanding in the Soul. The subduing and mortifying these sensual Lusts, has a tendency to improve and brighten the Understanding; and upon this account the Psalmist tells us, Psal. 119, 7, 8. *The Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the Eyes. And a good Understanding have all they that keep his Commandments.* And on this account he was wiser & excelled his Teachers; while the indulging these & those sensual Lusts tends directly to render the Soul, unactive, dull & sottish. How does Intemperance, Unchastity and the like fleshly Lusts, not only exhaust & drink up the very Spirits of the Man that indulges himself in the Practice of them, but also cast a Mist and a Cloud over his Understanding, and render him insensible, and keep him in a constant Doze, as tho'tless and inadvertent as the very Beasts that perish. We see this in many a Sensualist; not only that his Body becomes a walking Hospital, full of all kinds of loathsome Diseases, but his Soul full of *Darkness and Confusion*; and the
Light

Light of Understanding by GOD light up in the Soul, almost totally obscured and put out. And is not this a great Injury to the Soul, to have any Mists and Clouds hang upon the Understanding, upon which we absolutely depend to direct our way for us, and in all cases to make it plain before us? We are unspeakably Unhappy (yea it is one of our greatest Miseries) on the account of that Darkness that has wrapped up the Understanding by our first parents Fall; and yet every sinful Lust indulged tends to render that Darkness thicker and more total still; so injurious is it to the Soul.

3. The indulgence of these fleshly Lusts, is *Destructive of the Peace & Quietness of the Soul.* The happiness of Man on Earth consists in the quietness and easiness of his Mind; and the only way to attain and enjoy this happiness is to mortify our Lusts and Corruptions, and to be steady in the Practice of *Religion*; and the indulging sinful Lusts tends directly to render the Soul *restless and uneasy* both while Men live, and very commonly when they come to die.

1. The *Peace of the Soul is destroyed by the indulgence of sinful Lusts for the present, even while the Man Lives.* It is impossible but Vice should make the Soul uneasy; for Sin is the Sickness and Distemper of it; and the Soul can no more be easy & calm while it is infested with it, than the Body can be easy, with a dis-

located

located Bone or a raging Fever. If the Sensualist has not stupified & finned away his Conscience, it is impossible but that he should be always uneasy and discontented, and his Soul like the *troubled Sea*. What can the lively apprehensions of the Wrath of GOD produce in the Soul, but uproar and confusion! And this is every where represented to be the true State of a Sinner, that he enjoys no true Peace. He may seem outwardly Easy and Merry; but alas! it is only from the Teeth outward: Could we but retire into the Breast of such a Man, we should find a great deal of uneasiness and sorrow. The Observation of the wise Man concerning them is, *That in the midst of laughter their Heart is sorrowful, and the end of their Mirth is heaviness*. And the Prophet in the most lively manner represents their restlessness, by the Sea when ruffled by a Storm or Tempest, whose Waters cannot rest, but are continually casting up Mire & Dirt. There is *no Peace saith my God to the Wicked*, Isa. 57. 21. The Foundation of present Peace must be laid in Holiness. *Great Peace have they* (saith the Psalmist) *that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them. The work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the effect of Righteousness Quietness and Assurance forever*. Religion tends to allay those guilty Fears that commonly arise in the Sinner's Soul, and to create that Peace & Joy, that the Sinner never intermeddles with, and must

must forever be a stranger to, let him be in what Place, in what Employment, in what Company soever. This is generally the Sinner's Case; except by the repeated Acts of Vice, and the frequent indulgence of fleshly Lusts, his Conscience is grown callous & stupid; which is a Condition next to desperate; for while he that is awake and in danger, is like to use Means for his safety, he that is asleep perishes without Tho't or Care. And as the indulgence of these tends to destroy the Peace of the Soul, while the Man Lives; so,

2. *They have the same tendency when Men come to Die.* And truly, however Men for the present may amuse and stifle their guilty Fears, *then* they will be boisterous and break forth; and if they are not prevented by the violence and stupefaction of the bodily Disease, they will then fill the Soul with uproar and confusion. And indeed what can be the consequence of a sensual Life, but this uneasiness and discontent? If the Man that has led such a Life when he comes to Die be awake there is nothing most certainly in that gloomy Hour, that can possibly be a solid Foundation of Peace and Comfort to him, let him cast his Tho'ts which way he will. Suppose he then runs back in his Tho'ts upon the past Passages of his Life, he finds them all fill'd up in the gratification of his Lusts; finds his whole Life to have been spent in pampering the Body, and in serving the

the Interests and the Desires of it. And all the while his Soul has been never once tho't on to any purpose, but left starving and dying; nothing done for the Safety and Happiness of it. Can there be any ground of Peace in this, thus to run back in his Tho'ts for Years past, be it *Twenty, Thirty, or Forty* Years together, and find not one Action that he can rest satisfied in? none but must needs administer uneasiness & terror to him. And if he looks *inward*, turns in upon the Tho'ts of his Soul, will the prospect be more comfortable than to reflect upon the Actions of his Life past? Verily No! There he finds the *imaginations of the tho'ts* of his Soul to have been *evil only evil and that continually*. There he finds all the Powers of his Soul disordered and defiled by those sensual Lusts, that his whole Life has been spent in the gratification of. He finds his Understanding destitute of the Knowledge of things Spiritual & Divine; such gross Ignorance that the things of the Spirit of GOD are counted foolishness; the *Will* fixed on sensual Objects, chusing them, and full of enmity against GOD, and refusing any subjection to Him and His Law. And from a lively sense of these things, there we shall find *Conscience* rousing like an angry Lion, and arraigning & condemning the Sinner for all his sinful Indulgences and worldly Lusts, that his Memory in a fresh and very lively manner brings now before him, and sets in the light of His Countenance, as they have

have always been in the light of GOD's. And can there be any Ease or Comfort in this prospect? No verily, nothing but distress and anguish! And suppose he casts his Eyes around him, there he beholds no ground of Comfort or Relief neither. He beholds, it may be, His old *Companions* in Sin and Wickedness, those that have tempted *him*, and those that *he* has tempted into these and those Vices. But all these are only so many Remembrancers of his Sin and Guilt unto him, and so many additions to his present Misery and Torment. And he may behold others also, that may drop a Tear to behold his Distress and Anguish, and in tender Pity and Compassion will pour out a Prayer for his poor distressed Soul: and that is all they can do; for when they would gladly speak Peace to him, they dare not in faithfulness to GOD and his Soul; they see no solid Foundation for it. And then, O how dreadful the Prospect to look upwards! there to behold the Heavens gathering blackness & thundering; GOD armed with revenging Justice, hastening to punish him for all his horrid Crimes; resolutely fixed (as he has the greatest reason to fear) never to shew one article of Mercy to him more. And therefore tho' he would now gladly be looking up to GOD, who before has been in none of his thoughts, he dare not: he is now afraid to look unto Him, whom he has so often and so greatly affronted; and yet he dare not cast an eye any other way.

every prospect is so full of horror. He sees nothing before him but Legions of Devils, waiting for, standing ready to catch, and greedily to seize on his guilty Soul, and to drag it away with them, to their uncomfortable abodes; to be its unhappy convoy to the Place of Torments, even to Hell, which he beholds gaping to receive it. And in this confusion, the unhappy Creature would be glad to Repent & cannot; he knows not where to begin this important business, nor where to end: and in this confusion, the bodily disease draws on apace, and shuts up the Scene of his unhappy Life; and in this dreadful horror he dies. Are not then, these fleshly Lusts inexpressibly *injurious to the Soul*, when they lay such a foundation for its misery, while the Sensualist Liv'd, and when he came to Die?

And then,
 4. If we follow the *Soul into the separate State*, there we shall find how infinitely more injurious these Lusts are unto it. Where the Soul is immediately lodged upon its separation from the Body, in what Place, may not be so easy perhaps to determine; tho' in a different Place, it may be, from what it will be after the Resurrection of the Body, and the final Judgment. Wherever the Place be, whether in some dismal Cavern, some gloomy Vault underground, it is certainly where the Soul is miserable; unhappy beyond all tho't and expression. It is immediately gathered with Sinners like it self,
 into

into the same Place of misery, horror & despair : placed at an infinite distance from the Fountain of all Good, and the Center of our Happiness ; shut out from His favour, and under His frowns, and the bitter effects of His Anger, that, *O who knows the power of !* but these unhappy Creatures, that feel the dreadful weight of it : Condemned to the most wretched Society ; to the Company of Devils and damned Ghosts, like it, tormented in every Power of it : having Misery adapted to the Nature of every Faculty, and particularly tormented with the strongest desires after those sensual Satisfactions, that it sinfully indulged while on Earth : and at the same time despairing utterly of the gratification of them ; and all the while, full of direful expectations of more wrath and misery to fall upon them, at the final Judgment, (*so the Devils believe & tremble*) and of raging despair, arising from a full assurance of their being, by the ~~eternal~~ Decree of Heaven, chained down to endure this Misery to all *Eternity*. This in brief is some small part of the injury, these fleshly Lusts, when inordinately indulged, do to the Soul in the *future State* ; as GOD has plainly *threatned*, and as is the natural *tendency* of them. And who now can question (even from these general hints) whether these Lusts are injurious to the Soul or not ? when they are so hurtful to it for the present and for the future, in this World and in the next. And what more powerful Argument can be

16 *A Sermon Preach'd to*
tho't on to perswade all Mankind to *abstain*
from them.

This then is the only **IMPROVEMENT**
I would make of what has been said, *viz.*

That as *we love & regard our Souls*, we
would be perswaded to *abstain from fleshy Lusts*
that thus war against them. Arguments
drawn, only from the present Welfare of the
Body, are won't to come with great Force upon
us. When we see this is for the Health, that
for the Ease, and the other for the Pleasure of
the Body, we are easily perswaded to attend to
them, and pursue after them: And shall we be
more easily moved to take care of the Body
than of the Soul? And be sooner awakened to
guard against any Injury that may happen to
that, than of wronging the Soul, and that in
the most substantial manner that can be? There
are many and the most weighty Considerations
that can be, to dissuade us from exposing our
Souls to so great a Misery, as we shall do by in-
dulging of sinful Lusts; but what more weighty
than these? We must be regardless of the *Dig-*
nity and Glory of them, destroy the *Peace* of
them for the *present*, and lay a sure Foundation
for their *unspeakable Misery* in the coming
World: And yet we cannot be perswaded to
abstain from them. These Considerations, in
point of our own Interest, make it the most rea-
sonable thing in the World, that we should al-

ways

ways be upon our Watch and Guard, that the Soul be not enslav'd to the Body, and be made to serve the mean Desires and the sordid Lusts of it. All Mankind are in great danger of being inordinate in the indulgence of these Lusts. The *natural Man's* Life is spent in little else, and therefore the Warning is very necessary and reasonable for us all. But among Mankind, none are in greater danger, and more prone to give themselves, a greater Liberty herein, than the *Youth*. To you then, *O Young Men*, is this Exhortation, with the greatest tenderness, and yet with the greatest importunity to be addressed.

Dearly Beloved, I beseech you abstain from fleshly Lusts, that war against the Soul. That war against the Honour, the present Peace & future Happiness of it. Be persuaded now to wage open War with these Lusts, and never suffer them to gain the victory over you. You see how unspeakably injurious they will be to you, (if indulged) while you Live, when you come to Die, and what a Misery they lay you open to in the other World. And these Considerations are of vast weight, to move you now to engage in this *Warfare*: And to encourage you into this War, I would add a *few Considerations* (tho' general) yet the most moving; and then leave with you an important *Direction or two* for the management of it, and conclude the Discourse. And to persuade and encourage you then to wage War with

with these Lusts, that War against the Soul, consider these *three* things only, *viz.*

1. That *no other Advantage* you can possibly propound to your selves, *will recompense the Damage of Soul, you will sustain by indulging these fleshly Lusts.* You may propound the Advantage of Pleasure or of Profit, and the like. And particularly the advantage of *Pleasure*, is one of the strongest Temptations to Men in *Youth* to indulge their Lusts: But alas! What are these, compared with the vast wrong and injury that is done the Soul? Our *Saviour* has already determined this for us: He has summed up the Account, and declares this to be the foot of it, that if for the sake of all the Pleasures, Riches and Honours of this whole World, a Man should expose and lose his Soul, he would be an infinite loser; would make the like foolish Bargain with him, who exchanges Pearls for Pebbles, Gold for common Dust; and infinitely more foolish, Mat. 16:26. *What is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World and lose his own Soul, or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* This Misery, this Injury we bring upon the Soul, cannot be weighed down, by all that the most extravagant Sensualist could possibly wish for, should he arrive to the Enjoyment of it all. And you will but infinitely cheat and deceive your selves, if you hope to obtain any thing that will equal this Misery, and be a Ballance to it.

And

And then Consider,

2. *There is a possibility, and if you engage in the Warfare while in Youth, a probability of obtaining the Victory and the Conquest.* Now you have a greater and more hopeful Prospect of it, than you will have hereafter. Indeed it is a Warfare that must be maintained, and will continue as long as we remain in the Body. We must wage a constant War with these Lusts: we must be always mortifying and subduing of them; but the greatest struggle & conflict is *at first*: Then is the opposition greater, and the conquest the more difficult to obtain. The after conflicts will be more easy. And multitudes by the help of the *SPIRIT of CHRIST*, have conquered them; and by the help of the same *SPIRIT* are going on *conquering & to conquer*. And the same *SPIRIT* and Grace are ready also to assist your sincere Endeavours: Yea, if you now early engage in this Warfare, you of all others, have the most hopeful prospect of the Victory. For nothing is more pleasing to Heaven, than to behold one in *Youth*, that is surrounded with the most powerful Temptations to indulge them, waging open War with these sensual Lusts; and whoever hopes to obtain Divine Aid and Assistance, such a one has no reason to Despair of it. The longer these Lusts are indulged, the more difficult & hard does it grow to mortify & subdue them; for *repeated Acts* of Vice do most certainly strengthen the *Habit*,

Habit, and render a Man's Repentance and Reformation the more difficult & unlikely. Hence is that of the Prophet, *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots?* Then may ye that are accustomed to do Evil, learn to do well. And will you now expose your Souls to this Misery, by indulging sinful Lusts, when you may thus conquer them all! And when if you engage against them, depending on the *SPIRIT* and the *Strength* of *CHRIST JESUS*, you may be sure of Success. How inexcusable will you be, when there is a possibility, and the highest probability of securing your Souls from it, *injure* if after all you thus wrong and ~~injure~~ them?

And then consider,

3. Finally, *An incorruptible Crown of Glory will be the Issue of the Conquest.* If you get the Mastery over these Lusts, you not only deliver the Soul from that Misery, that otherwise it is in every respect exposed to; but you will lay a sure Foundation for a Crown of Life and Glory that will never fade away. That most certainly will be the happy Conclusion of the Conquest. And will you not strive for the Mastery, when in the *Promises* of *GOD*, so great a Prize is in view? Most certainly, very unworthy are his Thots of the *Joy's & Pleasures of the heavenly World*; that prefers the Pleasures of Sin before them; and at the same Time, does it at the loss and expence of his Soul.

These,

These, among the many Considerations I might have left with you, are weighty enough to perswade you to engage with Courage and Resolution against these Lusts that War against the Soul.

I have now a few general & plain *Directions* to leave with you ; and I have done.

1. *Beg of GOD to give you a just notion of the World, a right view of it's Enjoyments.* The wrong apprehensions and the false notions that Mankind entertain of the present World and it's Enjoyments, is one of their greatest Miseries here on Earth : for from mistaken apprehensions of these things ; from looking upon these things as most excellent, easily and very naturally follows the mistake of exercising our greatest Care about them. And none are more prone than Persons in *Youth* to entertain an *unjust Thought* of these things. They look gay and tempting to them, and commonly make a fair shew of *Happiness* ; and they above all others, are in the utmost danger of pursuing them under that notion. They cannot see that the *Riches* of this World are *uncertain*, that the *Pleasures* are all *short-liv'd, flashy & unsatisfactory* ; and that worldly *Honours* are more *empty* than either of them : They cannot be perswaded, but that *Happiness* consists in the Enjoyment of these. They see not these things in their true *Colours* ; they view them in a false Light, and no wonder they make a false Judgment

ment of them. And as thro' the darkness and blindness of their Minds, they do not see thro' the deceit of these things; so they may be imposed more easily upon, having not met with so many *Disappointments* in their Expectations from them, and in their pursuits after them. And therefore, one of the first things you should beg for and labour after, is, that you may have a *true sight of the Vanity of the World*, and of the insufficiency of all it's Enjoyments to make you substantially Happy, that you may not be imposed upon and cheated by the seeming and transitory Glory of these things. In this lies your greatest hazard as you first appear in the World and on the Stage of Action. And here then should be your greatest Guard. Until your Tho'ts are corrected, and your Views set right about the present World, it is not possible that any Considerations should prevail upon you, to dissuade you from indulging sensual Lusts; from pursuing the Riches, Honours and Pleasures of this World to make you Happy. As the Foundation of all then, Cry to GOD, as you are setting forth into the World, That He would open your Eyes, and effectually convince you, that Happiness lies not below the Skies, and that He would *turn away your Eyes from beholding Vanity.*

2. *Seek earnestly for the Divine SPIRIT to help and assist you in the conquering & subduing your fleshly Lusts.* Tho' it be upon all accounts

accounts reasonable in you now to wage open War with these Lusts, yet engage not in it trusting and depending on your selves. You are not strong enough, nor sufficient to conquer and overcome the least Corruption, that your sensual part calls upon you to gratify & indulge, entirely of your selves; but will fall down an easy Conquest before the least Assault. You absolutely need the SPIRIT & Grace of CHRIST to aid & assist you; and these you have the strongest ground to seek for, from that encouragement or Promise our Saviour gives to move you to plead for them, Mat. 7.7. *Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* And in the next words, He there tells you, that He is more willing to give His HOLY SPIRIT to you, than ever you can find the most indulgent of your earthly Parents to bestow these things upon you. And will you not then, under a deep sense of the need you have of the SPIRIT, to assist you to mortify your Lusts & Corruptions; and under a sense of our Saviour's willingness to afford Him to you, be persuaded to go earnestly to our Saviour by Prayer, that you may obtain those Assistances from His SPIRIT that may be sufficient for you? Tho' you cannot of your selves conquer your Lusts you can do it by the SPIRIT of GOD; And GOD never denied His SPIRIT to those that sincerely & earnestly cry'd to Him that they might obtain Him.

Go then to GOD, and plead His readiness to bestow, and your need to obtain the SPIRIT; and you will be successful, and so gain the victory and conquest over all your Lusts and Passions.

3. *Watch and Guard against the first Motions and Inclinations of your Soul towards sinful Lusts, and reject them with Abhorrence.*

Dally and parley with no Temptation: This proves the fall & ruin of multitudes of Mankind. When they are first moved by their own corrupt Hearts, or assaulted with any Temptation from without, to indulge this or the other sinful Lust, they stand still to argue & to reason the Case; and every moment they are debating, the Temptation gains ground upon them, and they insensibly and suddenly fall by it. There is no trifling in such a Case. To hesitate is to be undone. Whenever then you are Tempted, *reject the first Motion* that is made, with Abhorrence, if you would be safe and come off a Conqueror. You all know how dangerous it is to let down the Watch, and to enter into a Parley with an Enemy that is waiting for an Opportunity to surprize us. The Apostle declares, Jam. 1. 15. *Then when Lust hath conceiv'd, it bringeth forth Sin.* The first approaches of Sin are usually Modest; but afterwards it maketh bolder Attempts. Your Wisdom then is to resist the first beginnings of Sin, to suppress it in the

the *Thought*, to mortify it in the *Heart*, before it breaks forth in the *Life*.

And then finally,

4. Be frequent in your *Contemplations on the Frailty and Mortality of the Body*. You of late in special, have had by the *Providence* of GOD the *fullest Convictions* and the plainest *Demonstrations* of it that can be. The repeated *Deaths of late*, and the removal of those of the same Rank, Order and Society with you, are clear Discoveries of your *Frailty* also, as well as the *Seeds of Mortality* that you carry about with you in your own Bodies. And no doubt, you have been following them in your *Tho'ts, into the Grave*. Your highest *Wisdom* is then to cherish such *Tho'ts* in you. Don't stifle them, nor suppress them: for nothing is a better *Preservative*, a more effectual Motive to dissuade you from indulging *fleshly Lusts*. View the *Body in the Grave*; there behold the *State and Condition* of it; and then judge, and say, whether it be worth the while to spend the whole *Life* in the present *World* to indulge it, and to gratify the *Lusts* of it.

will be

Look upon your selves as *Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth*, and upon your *Body* as mouldering apace into *Dust*, and it will most certainly tend greatly to the mortification of *fleshly Lusts*. This is one Argument used by the

the *Mistle* in the *Text*; and it is most cer-
tainly very weighty and moving.

O who could indulge these Lusts, that
looked upon his Body really as Dying; and
shortly to lie senseless and thoughtless, mix'd with
the common *Dust*! Into the Grave then fre-
quently carry your *Thots*: And diligently
observe these Counsels; and the *LORD* give
you *Understanding in all Things*.

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